

peror Shōmu, he made a vow to carve a sixteen-foot Śākya⁶ and its attendants;⁷ he completed them in the sixth year of the sheep, the tenth year of the Hōki era, in the reign of Emperor Shirakabe,⁸ and placed them in the golden hall of Noo-dera, holding a dedication ceremony. Then he made another vow to carve a ten-foot wooden statue of the Eleven-headed Bodhisattva Kannon,⁹ but he did not complete the work. Having spent years without many helpers, he he was too old and weak to carve it himself. When he was over eighty, he passed away in bed at Noo-dera on the eleventh day of the second month, in the spring of the tenth year of the boar, the first year of the Enryaku era, in the reign of Emperor Yamabe 山部¹⁰ who governed Ōyashima at Nagaoka Palace.¹²

After two days he was restored to life and called his disciple Myōki 明規,¹³ saying, "I forgot to say one word and, since I could not endure it, I came back to the world." Then he had an elevated seat made on the floor, a rug spread on it, and a meal prepared. He invited Musashi no suguri Tarimaro 武藏村主多利丸¹⁴ of the devotees' organization,¹⁵ had him sit on the seat while he himself served the meal, and ate facing his guest. When it was over, he arose and, leading Myōki and all his relatives, knelt to pay homage to Tarimaro, saying, "I, Kanki, have used up my share of life, dying suddenly without completing the statue of Kannon. Luckily, having this good opportunity, I am wondering how I can express my hope. I beg you in your benevolence to complete the sacred image. If this moderate wish of mine is granted even in part, I will gain great fortune in the future and you will gain the merits for an immediate reward. As I had no control over my sincere wish, I dared to come back to make such a bold request. In awe and fear I am appealing to you in reverence."

Thereupon, Tarimaro as well as Myōki and the others grieved and wailed, saying to him, "We will be sure to complete the work you have told us about." Hearing this, the monk was delighted and stood up, clasping his hands in veneration.

6. 釋迦丈六; see I.32, n. 6.

7. 脇土 *kyōji*; Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.

8. 779, in the reign of Emperor Kōnin.

9. 十一面觀音; see Chap. II(3)b, n. 137.

10. 782, in the reign of Emperor Kanmu.

11. See II.1, n. 3.

12. Located at present Otokuni-gun, Kyoto-fu 京都府乙訓郡. Nagaoka was the capital from 784 to 794.

13. Unknown.

14. Unknown.

15. 知識 *chishiki*; see Chap. I(1)d, n. 110.

Two days later, on the fifteenth of the same month, he called Myōki and said to him, "Today is the anniversary of Buddha's entry into nirvana,¹⁶ and I, too, will end my life." Myōki was about to say that the master was right, but, out of love for his dear master, he lied, saying, "No, the anniversary has not come yet." Looking at the calendar, the master said, "Today is the fifteenth. How could you lie by saying that the day had not come, my child?"

Having asked for hot water, he washed himself. He changed his clothes, knelt to clasp his hands in veneration, held an incense burner, faced to the west, and died at four in the afternoon of the same day.¹⁷ In accord with his wish, the Buddhist artist Tarimaro had already completed the statue and held the dedication ceremony to report to Buddha how the statue came to be made. It is now found in the pagoda of Noo-dera.

The note says: How praiseworthy the Most Venerable Mimana no Kanuki is for keeping the Buddha's mind inside and manifesting an average form outside, living a mundane, householder's life and yet not defiling his jewel of the precepts.¹⁸ At his last moment he faced to the west, and his devotion to the vow made his spirit work out an extraordinary sign. Indeed, we know that this is sacred and not ordinary.

3 I

*On a Woman Who Gave Birth to Stones and Enshrined Them as Kami*¹

In the village of Kusumi, Mizuno, Katakata district, Mino province 美濃國方縣郡水野郷楠見村,² there was a woman whose surname was

16. 佛涅槃 *Butsu-nehan*; the fifteenth of the second month is regarded as the date of Śākyamu-ni's entry into nirvana.

17. This is the typical manner of death for those who have faith in rebirth in the western pure land. Cf. I.22.

18. 戒珠 *kaishu*, virtue of self-discipline.

1. One of the legends on the birth and growth of stones. See Yanagita Kunio, "Seiseki densetsu," *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, V, 493-498.

2. Present Nagara, Gifu-shi 岐阜市長良. For the significance of this story, see Chap. II(2)b.

Agata-no-uji 縣氏.³ She was over twenty but unmarried, and she became pregnant without any sexual intercourse. At the end of the second month in the spring of the tenth year of the boar, the first year of the Enryaku era, in the reign of Emperor Yamabe,⁴ she gave birth to two stones after a three-year pregnancy. They measured five inches in diameter. One was blue and white mixed together, while the other was pure blue. They grew year after year.⁵

In Atsumi 淳見 district,⁶ next to Katakata district, there was a great kami, whose name was Inaba 伊奈婆.⁷ The deity took possession of a diviner⁸ and spoke through him, saying, "The two stones which were born are my own children." Therefore, they were enshrined at the girl's residence in a sacred place surrounded with a hedge.⁹

We have never heard a story like this from ancient times until today. This is also a miraculous event in our country.

32

On a Fisherman Netting Fish Who Was Almost Drowned in the Sea but Saved Owing to His Devotion to Bodhisattva Myōken¹

Kurchara no imiki Nanimomaro 吳原忌寸名妹丸² was of the village of Hata, Takechi district, Yamato province 大和國高市郡波多里.³ From his childhood he used to make nets and catch fish. On the evening of the nineteenth day of the eighth month, in the autumn of the first year of the rat, the second year of the Enryaku era,⁴ he went out

3. The *Sandai jitsuroku* 三代實錄 gives the same name as a local gentry family.

4. 782, in the reign of Emperor Kanmu.

5. See Chap. II(2)b.

6. Present Inaba-gun, Gifu-ken 岐阜縣稻葉郡.

7. Inaba Shrine 稻葉神社 is located in this district.

8. 卜者 *kamnagi*.

9. 忌籬 *imigaki*; or *igaki*, the hedge which marks the holy precincts of a shrine.

1. Similar to III.35.

2. Unknown. Since the name *imiki* was often conferred on immigrant families, the Kurehara family may have immigrated from China.

3. Present Hata, Takechi-mura, Takechi-gun 高市郡高市村畑.

4. Enryaku 2 is the tenth year of the boar 癸亥, and Enryaku 3 the first year of the rat 甲子 (784).

upon the sea between Iwataki Island 伊波多岐嶋⁵ in Ama district in Kii province 紀伊國海部郡 and Awaji province 淡路國⁶ to cast a net and catch fish. There were nine fishermen in three boats. All at once a gale came up, destroying the three boats and drowning all the men except him.

Floating on the water, Nanimomaro devoted his heart to Bodhisattva Myōken,⁷ making a vow and saying, "If you save my life, I will make a statue of Myōken as tall as I am." He floated on the sea and battled the waves, exhausting himself and nearly losing consciousness, being more asleep than awake. He awoke on a bright moonlit night to discover himself lying on the grass on the beach of Kata 蚊田浦濱,⁸ Ama district, Kii province. Having been saved, he took his own measurements and made a statue as tall as himself.

Ah, how miraculous! When the gale destroyed the boats and waves drowned his friends, he was the only one that survived. Therefore, he made a statue as tall as he was. Indeed, we learn that he was saved by the great help of Myōken and the power of his devotion.

33

On the Immediate Penalty of Violent Death for Persecuting a Humble, Begging Novice¹

Ki no atae Yoshitari 紀直吉足² was popularly called Lord Hashi no icgimi 椅家長³ in the village of Wake, Hidaka district, Kii province 紀伊國日高郡別里.⁴ He was innately evil natured and did not believe in the law of karmic causation. In the fifth month in the summer of the second year of the ox, the fourth year of the Enryaku era,⁵ a provincial official who was making the rounds of the district to give out

5. It may be Tomogashima 友島 off the coast of Kada, Kaisō-gun, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣海草郡加太.

6. Present Awajishima, Hyōgo-ken 兵庫縣淡路島.

7. See Chap. II(3)b, n. 133.

8. See n. 5, above.

1. Similar to I.29; II.1, 35; III.14, 15; etc.

2. The *Shinsen shōjiroku* lists the Kii family in Kinai as descended from kami.

3. See I.10, n. 3.

4. Present Hidaka-gun, Wakayama-ken.

5. 785, in the reign of Emperor Kanmu.